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## LEATHER DECORATION.

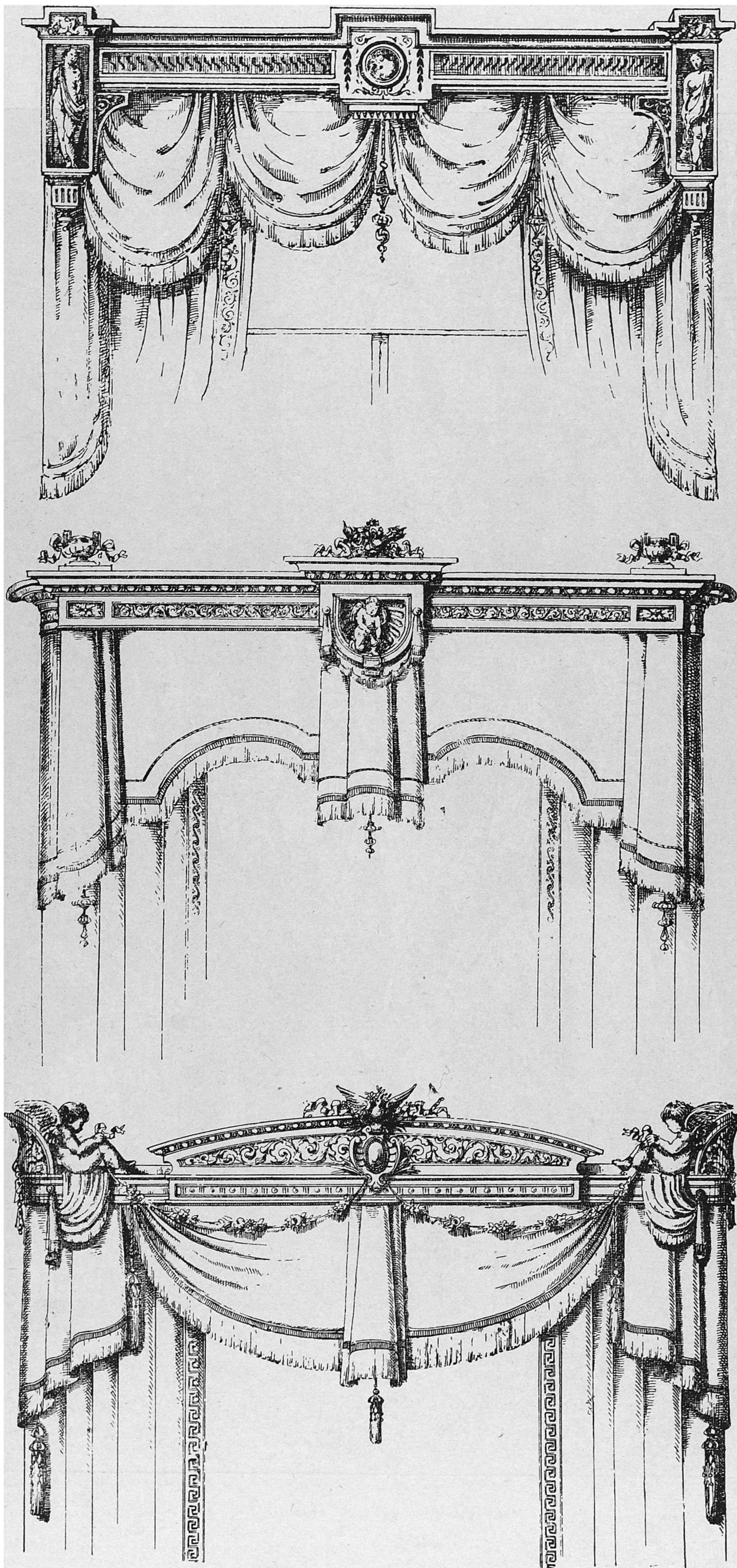
THE use of leather for window lambrequins and draperies, has come into fashionable prominence. One city firm recently furnished twenty-four sets of leather lambrequins for the dining-room of a prominent club house just completed. The effects produced by leather as a drapery are brilliant and novel; the rich contrasting colors when blended in good taste are highly decorative. Nearly every form that tapestry can take can be produced in leather without loss of grace.

Aside from the use of leather in the decoration of windows we find it extensively employed for wall draperies, panels, and the like. The upholstering of furniture with this material was formerly confined almost exclusively to the dining-room, but it has now invaded other apartments, and is even seen in the parlors. Leather cabinets are by no means unusual, and the susceptibility of the material to a high finish makes it very desirable for purely decorative purposes. Finished in gold, with all the brilliancy that such a finish can give it, it is used in screens, with single, two or three folds, screens showing all the beauties of a highly artistic production, graceful and beautiful furnishing for a parlor or a salon. Silvered effects are given it as well, and all the more attractive metallic effects.

Panels reproduce the conceptions of our finest artists, and bring into bold relief, heightened and made effective by judicious coloring, the creations of their brush or pencil. The charming figures of Moyr Smith have been transferred to leather, and they serve as beautiful accessories to rich furniture. Other panels adorn the ceiling and the walls.

SHALL an artist or decorator do cheap work, or shall he undertake only such enterprises as he knows to be in the interests of true art and the eventual furtherance of his fame and standing? It is akin to the old question: Shall a lawyer defend a man whom he knows to be guilty? The ethical codes of guilds and professions are seldom known to, or understood by, the general public; hence, patrons and customers fre-

quently ask that rules of these codes be violated, without dreaming that they are asking for what may be to the disadvantage of the worker or professional man with whom they have dealings. Honesty pays best in the long run, and in all such cases principle rather than temporary benefit should be the guide. If an artist or decorator demeans his art but once, he may as well make up his mind to keep on doing so, and there will be a decrease in strength and ability in his best work, as a consequence. I know several artists who started forth upon their careers under most favorable auspices, but who having descended to "pot boilers," created a demand for cheap work of that class, and thus shut off opportunity for selling their best pictures. "Pot boilers" seem to be necessary in some instances for the avoidance of unpleasant relations with the grocer, the house agent and the laundress; but a man can paint a small picture or execute a small decoration without violating any high principle of art. He can do his best on a 6x9 as well as on a 24x30. When a man pretends to any skill in art, the picture-buying and appreciative public look to see him fulfill the requirements of his trade. It is only unthinking people and those of coarse tastes who ask an artist to sacrifice his labor and his ideals for a money consideration, and I submit that they are not the kind of people whose opinions or whose custom should eagerly be sought. Only those who have been constrained to do work below their standard realize the irritation and shame of such a course. The skilled and conscientious musician who is asked at a public gathering to favor the company with a performance on the piano of the "Jim Crack Polka," the trained singer who is asked to execute a solo on "Grandfather's Clock" for the benefit of an assemblage whose musical taste that represents, the Shakespearean actor or reader who is requested to recite passages from "The Lime Kiln Club," can sympathize with the artist who is asked to paint something cheap. The artist is, in a measure, a public educator, and his aims should be to educate public taste into demanding the best work.



LEATHER LAMBREQUINS AND CURTAINS, FROM DESIGNS BY WILLIAM SOCHEFSKY, NEW YORK.